



Rick Dangerous II.  
The Man in the Hat is Back..  
IN A FLASH!

FREE FLAMES OF FREEDOM SPECIAL

# ACE

■ ST ■ AMIGA ■ C64 ■ CPC  
■ SPECTRUM ■ PC  
■ NINTENDO ■ SEGA ■

A SPECIAL EDITION  
OF THE ULTIMATE  
GAMES  
AND FUTURE TECH  
MAGAZINE.

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

FLAME ON!  
MIDWINTER 2 REVIEWED



**PLUS:**

GUNSHIP 2000 ● RAILROAD TYCOON ●  
SILENT SERVICE ● RICK DANGEROUS 2 ●  
SIMULCRA ● COVERT ACTION ● MIDWINTER ●  
F15 STRIKE EAGLE II ● M1 TANK PLATOON ●



## WELCOME!

Welcome to your free Mini-ACE. This bite-sized version of the Ultimate Games Magazine has been compiled from more than a dozen issues. We've picked reviews from the last couple of years to give an impression of the lengths we go to when previewing and reviewing software. We take our gaming seriously, and aim to give you the best possible picture of all aspects of each title we look at. We hope you enjoy the mag.

Another ACE Publication

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## CONTENTS

### GAMES REVIEWS

#### 4 *Midwinter 2 -Flames of Freedom -*

You've bought the game - now read the review! View the ACE Verdict on the game you're playing now. There are a few tips here too.

#### 6 *Gunship 2000 -*

Currently in the late stages of coding in the States, Gunship 2000 looks like being a genuine breakthrough in combat flight simulators. Here's your chance to check

#### 8 *Railroad Tycoon -*

Take on British Rail at their own game. The review of the game is now standing on Platform 8.

#### 10 *Rick Dangerous 2 -*

Back BACK! Brave Rick, top secret agent and all-round hero returns to thwart an even more dastardly enemy plot than last time..!

#### 12 *Simulcra -*

This fantastic futuristic polygon-driven space-flight was awarded the coveted ACE Rated award. For a full verdict, see page 12.

#### 14 *Silent Service -*

Run silent, run deep. The ACE overview tells you all you need to know about one of the best Sub-sims on the market.

#### 18 *Covert Action -*

Another ACE Rated game! The murky world of espionage is available for exploration in this multi-faceted adventure. For the low down, check our review.

#### 22 *F15 Strike Eagle II -*

Two pages of hard information on the famous flight sim. Everything you could wish to know is here.

#### 27 *M1 Tank Platoon -*

A special ACE feature on the tanks, the sims and the game in particular. If it isn't here, it isn't worth knowing.

#### 30 *Midwinter -*

Long before the Flames of Freedom flickered there was the game set in the Big Chill. Well worth hunting around for this classic if you're new to the Midwinter series.

## OFFER

#### 16 **SUBSCRIBE! -**

Your chance to ensure that you receive your own copy of the full-size ACE delivered direct to your door every single month. And you can also select a free game for your trouble.



# MIDWINTER II flames of freedom

**Bigger and better than its astonishing predecessor, *Midwinter II* is an amazing game.**

It's 65 years since the big freeze. The global climate is beginning to warm and Midwinter Island is thawing out and breaking down into a set of new islands. Off the coast of Africa, a strategically important set of atolls and islands are rapidly falling under the control of the tyrannical Saharan Empire. Agora, stronghold of the Atlantic Federation is in an increasingly precarious situation. It is clear that once sufficient control over the bulk of islands in the group has been attained, Saharan forces will be strong enough to overwhelm the Federation forces on Agora.

It's your task, as a sole Federation agent to prevent Saharan growth, liberate islands, delay the Saharan armada and redress the balance of power.

Before the mission can begin, you must construct your agent. Name, colour, sex, height, weight and appearance can all be altered. The psychological and physical build of your agent will determine how you have to play the game. Equally, your actions during the game will alter the character. *Flames of Freedom* includes possibly the most worthwhile and tangible character development seen in a game so far.

Rather than embarking on a long campaign which may have no real effect on the march of the enemy, you can simulate the results of successful missions on certain islands and view how the Saharan fleet will behave as a result. The islands are connected via supply lines, and you'll soon learn how to create chain reactions; taking one island will cause another to fall, cutting off supply lines to another and so on.

By forcing the Saharan forces through Federation strongholds, you can force a higher rate of attrition on their part, thus making the final conflict on Agora more balanced.

Once you have chosen a particular set of islands to take, and which one you wish to start, your controller will then bring you as to your missions. Once each set of missions has been completed, the island will fall

under Federation control. Depending on the nature and strategic importance of the island, your list of missions will be appropriately tough.

Throughout the course of his mission, you must interact with characters on various islands. Some are neutral, others are strongly allied to either the Saharan or Atlantic Federation cause. Others are double agents and some are just plain mysterious. A great many violent interactions with other people will enhance your ability to threaten and menace but the chances are you'll completely forget how to charm people.

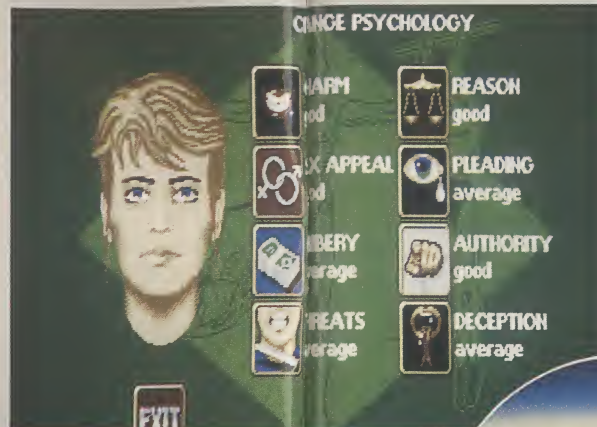
Now, on top of all this strategy are the 3D graphics. Whenever you're in a vehicle, the world is depicted in polygon graphics. Superior to anything you've seen before, these represent the landscape in a truly amazing way. Waves break on the shore, the tide comes in, bombs leave craters and the world even looks different depending on what time of day it is. Infra-red cameras are available for night activity. This level of detail, of course, depletes the frame-rate a little but everything still comes together for an immensely impressive overall effect.

## TRAVEL AND TIME

The *Flames of Freedom* gameworld is enormous. Probably around eight times the size of *Midwinter*. As a result, your chosen mode of



One of the fractal views of the game area. By testing your strategy on this screen you can avoid expending lots of time on ineffective island-toppling.



One of the most entertaining modes of transport is the bi-plane. In all there are 22 different ways of moving around in the game. Each better suited to particular missions.

**Flames of Freedom** is an exceptional game. Most of its elements (apart from the fractal-graphics) have been seen in some form or other before. However, it's the way in which all these elements: strategy, action, character interaction and grand-scale wargaming have been combined which make it such an excellent game. For the novice player, it represents quite a steep challenge, but the icon-driver is as friendly as possible. The depth of play alone makes *Flames of Freedom* a classic.

ACE RATING	ATARI ST
950	
9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	

**RELEASE DETAILS**

AMIGA	£24.99	LATE MARCH
ATARI ST	£24.99	LATE MARCH

No other versions planned



transport is vital. Quite apart from simply travelling around the islands, there's a lot of ocean to cover too. There are around 22 different modes of transport, each with its own characteristics. Moving around the world no matter what transport you have is easy. By clicking on your destination using one of the variable-zoom fractal representations of the map, you can speed up time and reach your target almost immediately. Game time, of course progresses as normal.

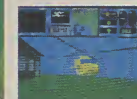
## MISSIONS AND PEOPLE

The missions incorporated in the game offer far more depth than those in most war-strat games. You must assassinate enemy agents, blow up command centres, attack supply routes and build up confidences and alliances with the people you encounter on the islands. Successful completion of a set of missions will result in con-

Detailed breakdowns of your physical and psychological make-up are available for inspection at any time. As well as being able to define the initial levels, you can watch your character grow throughout the game. Each factor has an effect on the outcome of different encounters. (left) Maps of the island offer invaluable information on the locations of weapons, people and vehicles. (below)



Throughout the game the chances are that your encounters with the secret police will end you in the clink. Your sex appeal and charm are often more useful than your muscle. (left)



Travel can take a long time. Prudent use of the Speed-Up icon (top) will help you on your way. Handy parking on the lawn of a building (above) offers impressive fractals for the sea-bed and the waves themselves (below)



gratulations from your commanding officer, some effect in slowing the Saharan assault and possible a bonus reward from the people of the island.

Once you've found a person (you'll know of at least one person on most islands), you can talk to them and try to get some useful information out of them. Some will offer help immediately, either by giving you transport,

## THE MAPS

Maps offer all sorts of information depending on the zoom-rate. Icons denoting contacts, weapons and transport all pop up. By clicking on them, you can find out more about each one. It's from the map screen that all the long-distance travelling goes on. These overviews of the game are invaluable.

© Jim Douglas



Your mysterious controller will present options and mission details. He can tell you cabot contacts, vehicles, the progress of the Saharan fleet and even secret weapons.





MICROPROSE are preparing to unleash a multi-chopper assault on the simulation market. ACE went to the USA to catch an exclusive peek of the game in development...

# GUNSHIP 2000

**G**unship has to be the most popular helicopter combat game ever - Microprose claim it still lifts off the shelves in respectable numbers, despite having been released over three years ago. Attention to detail, extensive missions and lots of incidental interest as you climbed up through the ranks made Gunship a winner.

Times have moved on, however, and Gunship's role as Top Gun of the chopper squad has arguably been surrendered to newcomer LHX Attack Chopper from Electronic Arts. Military sim



Now here's a neat idea, though it's not 100% certain it will be included in the final version. You can remove the cockpit display (except for vital gauges) and give yourself a better view of your surroundings. Here you're near the runway.

technology has improved in other ways, too. First you've got the obvious advances in 3D graphic routines and this has been accompanied by an increasing concentration on strategic diversity. Microprose's own M1 Tank Platoon pointed the way ahead on this last count, giving the player greater strategic opportunity by adding in more vehicles. Now, in the same vein, the company are out to regain air supremacy with Gunship 2000.

'This game is more revolutionary than evolutionary,' declares game designer Jim Day. 'First, you've got multiple helicopters in flight at the same time. As the commander of a five chopper platoon, you can tailor your outfit from a whole range of state-of-the-art gunships including Blackhawks, Apaches, Cobras, Kiowas, and more.'

Quantity doesn't mean degraded quality, however, and Microprose have wisely ensured that the player still has access to total single chopper capability and gameplay whenever he wants. However, the ability to man, equip, and command an entire platoon adds enormously to the challenge.

What's more, you get a far greater number of armament options in Gunship 2000. The game designers spent hours poring over army manuals

## MEET THE TEAM

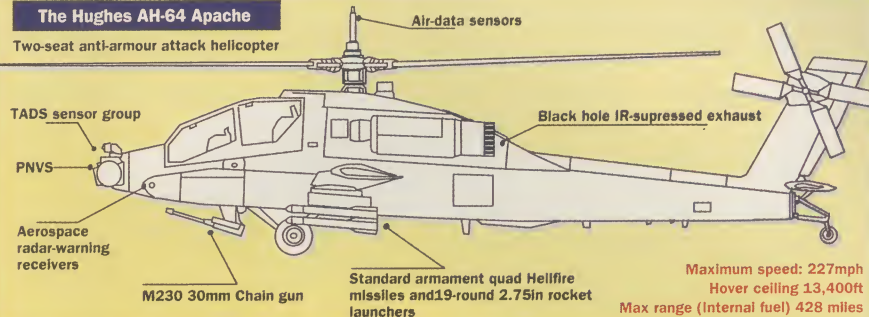
Work on Gunship 2000 started in Spring 1990 and, by the time it's finished, will represent nearly ten man-years of work. A significant proportion of this was devoted to the development of the new 3D system. Lead programmer Darrell Dennies is actually a true-blue Britisher and it may come as no surprise to discover that he served his programming apprenticeship with Digital Integration. Additional programming is being done by Detmar Peterke, artworks by Michael Reis, and marketing inspiration by Moshe Milich. Game design is by Jim Day.



Game designer Jim Day (on the left) and Darrell Dennies relax in Darrell's dug-out at Prose's US headquarters.

## The Hughes AH-64 Apache

Two-seat anti-armour attack helicopter



## FLASH TOPOGRAPHY

To do justice to the enhanced gameplay features of Gunship 2000, Microprose have developed a powerful new 3D system. Called 'Topographical 3D', the system has two main advantages over its rivals. First, it's faster (although 'Prose point out that this game is designed for more powerful 68000 micros and PC 286+ machines). Second, it allows the programmers to include more terrain details without bogging down the system. Result, more detail, faster action, and larger maps. It could take you at least quarter of an hour to fly in a straight line across one of the worlds, giving you a vast playing area.



Now for the first time you can fly gunships over home territory as Microprose include a European scenario. Snake Pages, your time has come!



Varied viewpoints are now de rigueur in all flight sims and Gunship 2000 gives you plenty of options. There's rather more to see, however, because first you have up to five choppers and second you make them do much more interesting things - true to modern helicopter design, some of them can even do rolls and loops!

and the result is that every type of chopper can be kitted out with practically any variety of real-life compatible ordnance.

## WEST END THEATRE

There are two Western theatres of war for Gunship 2000 missions: the Persian Gulf (ironic, eh?) and Europe. The Gulf scenarios, although still in an early stage of development, already have the ring of familiarity about them, but the European scenarios look to be something quite spectacular. There's something rather eerie about piloting a few tons of war machine over conflict, windmills, and the green, green grass of home.

Long-term interest is something that Microprose sims have never been short of, but

this time the company are really making sure that Gunship 2000 sticks around till its namesake anniversary by building in full scenario disk capability. Wherever there's trouble and dissension, wherever the forces of good are required to dump vast amounts of high-ex into the back gardens of the forces of evil, the data disks will be able to send you there.

Gunship 2000 is shaping up to be another

superlative long-term interest challenge in the true Microprose tradition. It also points the way forward for air combat sims by increasing the strategic elements and adding multiple command units. We'll be following the game's development over the next few months in ACE and the game should be ready for final review in Spring 1991. We can't wait...

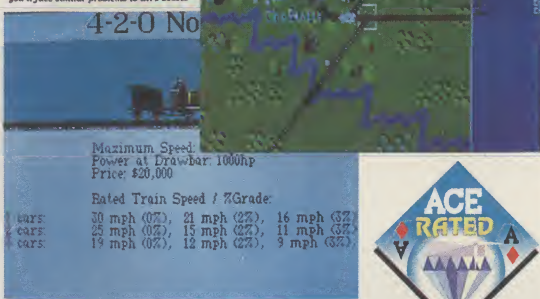
## ACE PREPLAY





The 420 is not exactly a candidate for an Intercity 125 line, but it's a start...

Nothing like Network SouthEast, but once your Empire grows to a reasonable size you'll face similar problems to BR's bosses



# RAILROAD TYCOON

## MICROPROSE give you the chance to outdo BR and build your own Railroad Empire

Being thrown to the mercy of British Rail every morning and evening, my train association is a pretty ghastly one; leaves on the line, points and overhead power cable failures and a myriad of glib and criminally insincere apologies. If you've had similar problems and think that you could run a railway system better, here's the chance to put your money where your mouth is and risk the wrath of a million commuters as you build your very own rail empire.

Options at the start of the game let you choose one of four scenarios, England, Europe and Eastern and Western America (the starting varying from 1828 to 1900 depending on the location), and one of four difficulty levels.

The map where the action is set is accurate, with all main towns and cities included. Only landscape features, such as mountains, lakes, farms, mines, chemical plants and steel mills are randomly generated.

The seeds of your empire are sown by building a track between two reasonably close conurbations and running a train service between them. Since this is an historically accurate program, at the start of the game train technology is poor. As the game progresses through time, new trains are "invented" and can be bought to replace your out-of-date units. But

for now you have to bite the bullet and suffer with a jalopy that does 15mph tops with two carriages.

Money is earned every time a train arrives at station with a load. Obviously the more carried, the more revenue is generated. And with more money, you can build your track further afield, buy shares in other railroads with takeover bids in mind, or even improve your stations with hotels, restaurants, large storage areas and the like!

Any station built in an urban environment produces mail and passengers. If its catchment area includes such features as a harbour, farm or mine, goods are produced, which can be taken to other stations for even more revenue!

### THE INDUSTRIALIST

The key to growing your empire lies in supply and demand. At first this seems simple: take goods from one place and dump them somewhere where they can be consumed. Not so. A more intelligent railroad operator will spot areas where goods can be taken and made into other commodities to be picked up later and deposited elsewhere, such as coals to a steel mill to make steel, cotton to a textiles mill to produce textiles, hops to a brewery for beer, and steel to factories to end up with manufactured goods. This method of play produces more than double normal revenue, since manufactured goods are worth more than raw goods, and gives you a firm footing for the future.

Keeping track of the supply and demand is easy at first, but as more trains and stations are added, the action becomes increasingly more frantic as you re-schedule your vast train roster and tweak your sprawling track network to ensure optimum performance.

And that's where Railroad Tycoon's winning formula lies. At the very outset you're irresistibly drawn into the action, and within minutes you begin to swiftly climb a horrible and very steep exponential curve of addiction as the game makes greater and greater demands on your concentration. Hours fly by, sleep is lost, and in my case, even entire weekends get taken up as you become a bigger and bigger Railroad God.

Put simply, Railroad Tycoon is an absolute classic. A game that gives your brain one of the most stimulating and enjoyable mental work-outs yet devised. Surely that's what computer gaming is all about.

Julian Rignall



Barroch: Kurvish! The final piece of track is about to be laid, and the trains can begin to run

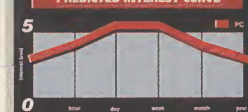
### RELEASE BOX

PC £34.95 Out Now  
No other version planned

All graphics cards are catered for. Obviously VGA is tops, but EGA is a jolly colourful whizz, and even in putrid CGA the action is still crystal clear. Sound is pretty good, with effective train noises on the standard speaker/speaker+ sound cards offer the benefit of atmospheric music and FX. Best of all, though, is that you don't need to own a 25 Mhz stonker PC to appreciate the game. Railroad Tycoon runs happily even on the crummiest machines.

GRAPHICS 7 10 FACTOR 9 ACE RATING 943  
AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 9

### PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Obviously this is not the sort of game you can just plough straight into. There is a fairly substantial manual to be absorbed first. Once you get a grasp of the basic principles behind the game you can really begin to enjoy yourself. Soon you will be building railroads to your heart's content, and for a good while too!

# THE STRATEGY GAME

# MIDWINTER

## OF THE DECADE ARRIVES

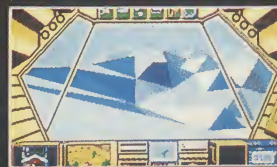
As a new Ice Age dawns in Rainbird's gigantic new classic, strategy gaming also enters a new era. For Midwinter is a genuinely original concept that launches revolutionary techniques onto the home computer screen.



The scenario is convincingly realistic as a new Ice Age grips the world. Together with a small group of pioneers you have colonized the Midwinter Isle, a 160,000 square mile land mass now under threat from invaders intent on seizing your sanctuary.



Compelling action and strategy take place across a spectacular 3D fractal generated landscape with its stunning geographical



accuracy. You control 32 personalities, each with different qualities, skills and complex personal relationships. Enemy movements can be tracked, and battle plans made, using the incredibly detailed on-screen map.

In your bid to defend the life-supporting heat mines, you can ski, hang-glide, travel by snow buggy or cable car, snipe and sabotage the enemy. There is no easy way to win, but the game's unique depth and absorbing complexity will keep you trying until you do.

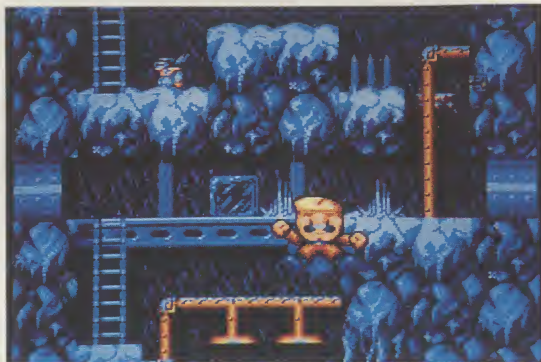
The deep Midwinter is upon us. Be prepared for a long and exciting battle against its elements.





Running, jumping mayhem from MICROSTYLE as Rick mounts the platform for another curtain call...

# RICK DANGEROUS II



Rick meets a chilly end in Freeze.

The original Rick Dangerous was something of a revival for the somewhat dated platform genre, due to its devious puzzles and superb presentation. Now, some 11 months later, Rick dons leotard, cape and boots and takes to the skies in a bid to save mankind from invading alien forces lead by his arch enemy, the Fat Man!

The game begins by offering the player a choice of four of the five available levels through which you must run, crawl, jump, shoot and bomb your way.

The overall feel of *RDII*, as with *RD I*, is superb. Each level follows a very different theme

and the game boasts a wide variety of excellent graphics, all of which have been designed with tongue very firmly in cheek. The cartoon sequences preceding play are both humorous and well implemented and give the player the impression that although not breaking through any boundaries, Core have gone out of their way to produce a game with genuine style.

Obviously, no hero can be expected to do his job properly if he is unarmed. To this end, Rick is equipped with a laser gun and a number of bombs although, as with the prequel, both are in limited supply and must be used with caution for best effect. Dotted around however, are numerous bonuses, some of which replenish your diminished stocks. In addition to these more physical defences, you are presented (in true platform style) with 6 lives with which to further your cause.

Playing the game, you will immediately realise that it is not only arcade reflexes that are required. Whilst the game is indeed fast and furious, attempting to speed through will inevitably lead you to blunder into a devious trap, of which there are many. Certain obstacles are seemingly insurmountable and require specific actions to be performed before they can be overcome.

This by no means infers, however, that *RDII* is lacking in any arcade elements. The speed at which some of the marauding nasties come at you push all hopes of a strategic withdrawal firmly to the back of your mind, at which point panic may easily set in as the limited defences you are allowed disappear in a frenzy of blasting.

Graphically, *Rick Dangerous II* is superb. You cannot fail to laugh at the expressions of the characters as they maraud haphazardly into your line of fire, only to taste exactly what it is that heros are made of! Robots, woodsmen, jut-jawed



Muddy colours - but then you're in the Mud Mines, so it's hardly surprising

rock men, bespectacled moles and searing lasers all display an individuality that delights the eye. This is in itself an incentive to play on into the game, just to see what Rick will die from next!

Rick himself is a typical hero - with white teeth and a gleam in his eye - and he struts about with all the confidence of someone who knows a good product when he sees it. Colour is also used to full effect and both are complemented by slick and varied animation.

As far as sound is concerned, Core have opted to go for the appropriate, rather than the technical approach. Certainly there is nothing that will have you reeling in awe at the new found sonic capabilities of the ST, but each sound that there is has been well thought out and fits perfectly. Front end and level-start tunes are definitely of the cartoon persuasion and round off what is, although dated in concept, a product that proves the continuing feasibility of one of the original game genres. There's just one problem: when you've cracked it (and you will - it's not that difficult) you're unlikely to want to return to it. Time then, perhaps, for *RDIII*...

● Alex Ruranski

# SORCERORS GET...

Ex-Infocom personnel create a new LEGEND for Microprose

Say what you like about adventure games, there are times when the industry comes up with a cracker that any gamer with half a brain ought to shell out for. *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*, *Lurking Horror*, and *Wonderland*, to name but three - and two of those came from the now-defunct Infocom.

Adventure scenarios, like books, tend to draw the bulk of their inspiration from a single author, unlike other games that are usually team efforts. Lucasfilm have managed to grab Brian Moriarty, who's recently given them *Loom*, and now another Infocom genius, Steve 'Leather Goddesses/Planetfall' Meretsky, has teamed up with some Infocompans to form the Legend label, distributed by Microprose. *Sorcerers Get All The Girls* is his first Legendary product.

And it's excellent, no doubt about it. Although it suffers from an extremely annoying parsing defect, this is a graphic adventure par excellence. It may not have quite the technical sophistication of *Wonderland*, but it makes up for that by generating a great deal of text, some nifty pictures (with a load of animation), and a complex story structure.

As Ernie Eaglebeak you start the game playing punchball for your wicked stepfather. You take refuge at Sorcerer University where you get stuck into student life until someone from a marauding band of phillistines clobbers you on the back of the head. When you awake, the university is deserted and you have a vague inkling

that you must locate your erstwhile Professor Tickingclock and reassemble the infamous Sorcerers Appliance using five scattered components.

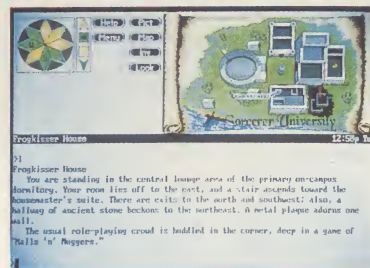
## A LA CARTE

*SGATG*, like *Wonderland*, combines point-and-click menu input with traditional typing. You don't HAVE to do any typing at all, but the menu system isn't as comprehensive as *Mag Scrolls* and you may well prefer to do so. There are verb, noun, and preposition menus that enable you to construct any sentence and the parser is (with one major exception) excellent.

The display includes a compass rose that shows possible exits and some options buttons for selecting different screen configurations. The latter include a map display, showing your current location and offering a 'click on it and you'll go there' facility (which only really works for adjacent locations). You can also have a text-only display, location graphics and play around with the various report elements to create a screen layout that suits you best. When location graphics are displayed, clicking on an object describes it and double clicking does the 'obvious' thing with it (usually getting it).

All this is a vast improvement over earlier adventure titles but is still not up to the *Wonderland* standard. The effect is spoiled by one major parsing shortcoming which used to be standard but nowadays, frankly, has to be regarded as a right pain in the a\*\*e. This is the old, unintelligent I need to be told to do everything approach that rears its head when you try to open a door. It goes something like this:

ENTER SHED  
The shed door is closed  
OPEN DOOR  
The shed door is locked.  
UNLOCK DOOR  
Unlock the shed door with what?  
UNLOCK DOOR WITH KEY  
Which key? The little brown key or the big metal key?  
UNLOCK DOOR WITH THE LITTLE BROWN KEY  
OK  
ENTER SHED  
The shed door is closed  
OPEN DOOR  
OK...



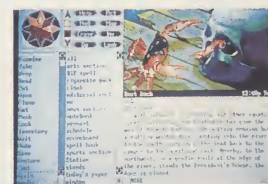
We've got rid of the menus and called up the map option, enabling us to get more narrative on screen at once and move from location to location by clicking on them...

Nowadays, if I want to enter a locked shed and I have the right key, I expect the program to do it for me without all this needless fuss and bother.

On the good side, however, *SGATG* is a big game with an involved and engaging story. You may not like the humour much - some of it is truly dreadful - but you will like the narrative variety and the numerous little sub-scenarios you can eavesdrop on or get involved with. And of course there's also the small matter of casting spells (especially the *ENLARGE BUST* one, ahem...) and the girls - who actually play a rather less titillating role in the story than you might expect.

If you fancy a romp through a fictional world, casting spells, chatting up the girls, and getting into some very tight corners, this is the adventure for you. Definitely up to Infocom standards and a promising debut for Legend.

● Steve Cooke



The default screen layout gives you the option of either mouse control using the menus on the left or typing using the text window on the lower right

**PIC** 5  
Initial interest will be held by the attractive cartoon-quality graphics and overall slick presentation. Once into the game, the relative ease with which it may be played up maintains that interest and the level of frustration ensures that players will be determined to complete it. Once achieved however, incentive to return to the game will wane.

**ATARI ST**  
870  
Well designed, coloured and implemented graphics certainly do not harm to the credibility of the ST and prove that ground breaking techniques do not necessarily always harm the edge. Sound perfectly complements gameplay while promising nothing that it cannot deliver.

RELEASE DETAILS		
ATARI ST	£24.99	TBA
AMIGA	£24.99	TBA
IBM PC	£24.99	TBA
CPC	£9.99st • £14.99dk	TBA
SPECTRUM	£9.99st • £14.99dk	TBA
C64/128	£9.99st • £14.99dk	TBA

No other versions planned

**PIC** 5  
The documentation impresses interest and a couple of lighthearted laughs but it doesn't get the adrenaline pumping out of your nostrils. Neither does the first glimpse of the game and the rather unimpressive menu system. However, you soon begin to appreciate the narrative detail and the numerous diversions and after a day's playing your hooked - until you crack it.

**IBM PC**  
895  
Great graphics and - if you've got a sound board - superb musical accompaniment. Unimpaired machine gets some impressive samples via the beep module, but they're so good that you just need to hear them once a great success. Not recommended if you don't have a hard disk: the game comes on nine 5.25" floppies and requires over 3 megabytes of disk space.

RELEASE DETAILS		
Currently on release only in the States, but Microprose UK will be making a UK distribution decision in the near future. Watch this space - but if you can't wait, phone US 'Prose on 0101 301 771 6700 for mail order details.		

# ... ALL THE GIRLS



**PIC** 5  
0

Simulcra is an apparently complex game on first acquaintance, but after a few goes you soon change your ideas. The gameplay is both absorbing and exciting and is going to keep you hooked for some time. In the long term, however, the frustration of not having a password system to enter the higher levels (there are thirty of them) is going to limit enjoyment. But see note in section box below.

**ACE RATING**  
**936**

**ATARI ST**

Excellent, highly recommended to shoot arm and to ordinary gamers too. The graphics are perfect - not too pretty pretty but with every pixel going to all to the game. The version we tested was complete, but a few bugs and a few more about the lack of a password system (see PC Comment above). However, we think it's a good game and it's a shame a later Access system might be implemented.

**RELEASE DETAILS**

ATARI ST	£24.99	OCT 90
AMIGA	£24.99	OCT 90

No other versions planned

Cyberscape rules in the far future, where even war is played out inside massive computer simulators. A particularly unpleasant virus has, however, had the effect of projecting the combat into the real world and as a result you have hordes of bloodthirsty simulcraft pilots wreaking havoc all over the place. Your objective is to enter the 'battle matrix' and destroy the other craft as well as the matrix itself.

You control a sophisticated Surface Reconnaissance Vehicle (SRV) with swing wings that give it limited flight capabilities. You drive your SRV around the matrix, encountering every so often a thin red line that denotes an energy barrier beyond which you cannot pass. You must then locate the relevant energy projector and destroy it, which will lift the barrier and allow you to proceed.

Simulcra is verging on the awesome, conjuring up immediate comparisons with the classic Virus. Your SRV rotates 360 degrees and can fly or drive. The rotation and shading are excellent and the game has a great feeling of speed. Battle is fast and furious and you can power up the SRV with loads of goodies including speed-ups, radar, fire and forget missiles, target display systems, shields, and extra lives.

The result is a fast paced 3D shoot-em-up that is slightly similar to Resolution 101 in gameplay terms but blends in elements of Falcon and Virus

#### TECHNO PORNE!

The 3D vector graphics system in Simulcra features solid filled 3D graphics with shadows and light intensity surfaces. The system allows solid and wireframe surfaces to be freely mixed. Stipple and transparent/semi-transparent surfaces are also employed.

The game code runs up to 252 non player objects on the map. The game cycle rate and the view cycle are independent so that game time can be kept more or less constant even if the display rate is slowed down.

Special explosion effects are achieved using a highly efficient particle controller that individually moves up to 100 particles. Definitely a game that goes with a bang!



Simulcra uses a grid-based map similar to Virus but includes 'blank' squares, introducing ground-based and flight action

# SIMULCRA

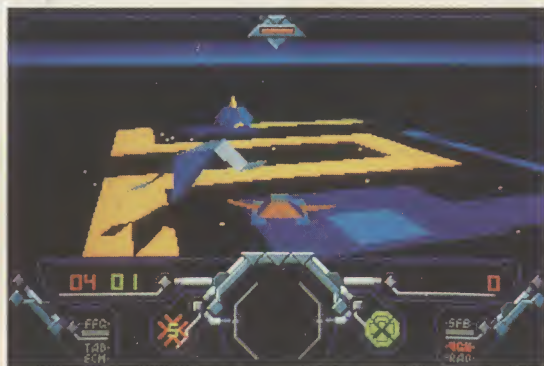
**MICROSTYLE** hurls you into the computer war of the future and produce a red hot 3D shoot-em-up as an incentive...



as well. In addition, the grid construction introduces a maze element. Sound effects are superb and add to the sensation of speed. There's also a wonderful intro sequence.

Just what a game should be: looks good, sounds good, and plays like a dream.

© Chris Morley



Solid graffgold with 252 non-player objects and 100 particles!

#### ALL OUT WAR

To add variety to an already exciting game, Microstyle have thrown in a wide variety of enemies. First, and most common, are the laser turrets that slowly sweep in a complete circle until they lock onto you, whereupon they fire viciously. Various ground and air attack craft, such as jeeps and small tanks, race around the walkways, thankfully needing only one shot to kill. Then you reach the megatanks - these can only be killed with missiles, but when shot explode in the most satisfactory way yet, by first ejecting the gun turret and then collapsing in on themselves with a terrific sound effect.

Throughout the game you also have access to a map screen for strategic planning - and there's also a neat power-up that gives you short range mapping radar facilities while you're moving.

## F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II

Flight sim fans know who does it best - and F15 II is our best yet!

At MicroProse we're pleased that our flight simulations are acclaimed as the best technical products around. We're proud of F-19 Stealth Fighter, Gunship and Knights of the Sky, for they accurately recreate every aspect of real life piloting, from the highs to the lows.

Now we're having fun with F-15 Strike Eagle II. A fighter pilots dream, as it is pure action all the way. Using the great 3-D graphics, real-world mapping and technical specifications of a supersonic jet, it puts the emphasis on flying and firing, dogfighting and duelling, shooting down and blowing up.

All the options you'd expect from a MicroProse flight sim are there - combining to give hundreds of different missions - but 'in-flight' you're left to concentrate on your 'stick' and your 'fire' button...and staying alive.

**MICRO PROSE™**  
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

The fact that there's plenty to do makes F15 II one of the most exciting simulations around...on screen presentation is brilliant...the graphics are utterly superb...it's certainly the most realistic 3D effect yet seen on a flight simulation.

C&VG 93%



F-15 Strike Eagle II is already available for IBM PC's and compatibles, and is coming soon for Commodore Amiga and Atari ST

IBM SCREENSHOTS SHOWN





# SILENT SERVICE

## MICROPROSE runs silent, deep and deadly

From its very outset, *Silent Service II* is typically Microprose: vast scenario, hugely complex gameplay and intense attention to detail. If ever there was a game that demanded significantly more than fast reflexes and a happy trigger finger, this is it.

Set against the historical backdrop of World War II, the program gives you the opportunity of recreating, in whole or in part, the career of a US submarine officer. This represents anything from thirty minutes to hundreds of hours of game time, supported by a 128 page manual, keyboard overlay with 70 commands, and dozens of mission possibilities.

Once through the obligatory security check (where you must correctly identify one of eleven Japanese warships), you are met with a massive array of options. The first of these presents you with four distinct game scenarios (see Battle Stations); others include selecting one of four difficulty levels (ranging from the complete novice, to the 'Ultimate'

player), starting date for engagement, submarine class (the latter two options are vital to one another as the chosen date dictates the sophistication of the submarine allowed) and even torpedo type!

Subsequent options presented to the player during the game depend heavily upon those chosen at the outset, leading to many possible situations. A typical battle scenario can involve close combat with dozens of marauding Japanese warships at short range, giving rise to much panic on the part of the player!

Gameplay tends to alternate between the Bridge Screen (where you sight your targets) and the Map Screen which enables you to make more long term strategic decisions.

Apart from actually controlling your ship, there are numerous intermission scenes ranging from seeing your torpedoes launched to monitoring the Captain's Log.

Aesthetically, *Silent Service II* is of a high standard throughout with digitised illustrative screens and well drawn, easily readable displays. In addition to this, each enemy ship is portrayed from a digitised photograph in any one of 24 perspectives for added feel.

One minor niggle involves continual disk access, in that accidentally pressing a key can involve waiting while the machine goes through its paces, although the ability to turn off certain animation screens helps solve this. That apart, *Silent Service II* is a must for all fans, and a worthy successor to the original, which has now sold so well that it is being converted to console!

• Alex Ruranski

## BATTLE STATIONS

The four scenarios in *SSII* should keep even the most ardent skipper busy for months to come.

First, **TRAINING** involves simple cruise and attack sequences in the vicinity of four unarmed freighter hulks. Its purpose is to familiarise you with the craft, the manual and the controls.

Then, there's **SINGLE COMBAT**, which isn't actually single at all, but drops you into one of nine engagements, eight of which are historically based. The ninth is a random encounter with a Japanese force.

**SINGLE WAR PATROL** propels you into the Western Pacific, hunting down the opposition, engaging them and returning to base.

Finally, there's the big one - a complete **WAR CAREER**. You join as a Skipper at any time during WW2, sail a series of war patrols in one or more boats, and finish up in either the grave or the victory parade. Microprose claims this final option could involve literally hundreds of hours of gameplay if you start at the beginning of the war in 1941.

All options pit you against Japan - America's mortal enemy after the raid on Pearl Harbour in 1941 until the end of the war following the atomic bombings of 1945. The struggle with Japan sprawled across the western half of the Pacific and among America's "Silent Service" heroes were men with silly names like "Mush" Morton, Dick O'Kane and Red Ramage! Now you can join them...




The Bridge Screen. Although this is where you sight your target, you can also access all pertinent information systems from this screen.





Damage control majors are comprehensive. Rapid action is needed if irreparable damage is not to become an irreparable disaster.


Powerplay 92% Generation 4 96% The One 93% T.G.M 95%


# Sid Meier's RAILROAD TYCOON

 You control every aspect of your Railroad's operation. Every choice you make affects the world around you. Change your Railroad - Shape a Nation.

 Set in the golden age of Railroads, 'Tycoon' gives you complete control of the economic resources of the Industrial Age, and the commercial struggles which thrust the world into the 20th Century.

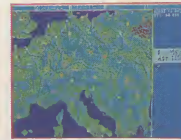
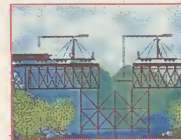
 Determine the fate of towns, the prosperity of businesses, the success of entire industries. Select the types of trains which will run on your Railroad, determine their schedules and designate the kind of cargo they'll carry.

 Overcome natural hazards such as storms or floods, or man-made catastrophes such as labour strikes and rate-wars. Other tycoons are determined to crush you or brush you from their path, and you'll have to outmanoeuvre them whilst operating your railroad and dealing on the stockmarket. All these decisions are set against the ever ticking clock of history. Trains improve, cities grow, industry alters. Every change brings a new decision - every decision a new change.

 The only thing more powerful than your locomotives is your drive to shape the nation. Your ambition. Your control. Your Railroad. "At the very outset, you're irresistibly drawn into the action, and within minutes you begin to swiftly climb a horribly steep exponential curve of addiction. Put simply, Railroad Tycoon is an absolute classic" 943 ACE Rated.

Railroad Tycoon will soon be available for your Commodore Amiga and Atari ST. Already published for IBM PC Compatibles.

**MICROPROSE™**  
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE



**PIC** 5  
0  
hour day week month year

With such a vast array of options and several difficulty settings, the game caters for both the complete novice and the hardened expert, providing the potential for literally hundreds of hours of absorbing play. Show us how to get into due to the complexity, but for the dedicated player there's months of long term interest.

**ACE RATED**  
910

**IBM PC**  
Supports VGA/EGA/CGA and EGA graphics, whilst sound options are supported by the Ad Lib and Roland MT-32 sound units including digitised speech. Apart from the disk access, the game makes excellent use of the PC and has all the right ingredients for a sequel from the successor to what was previously THE submarine sim.

**RELEASE DETAILS**  
IBM PC £39.99 OUT NOW  
No other versions planned at present.



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Amiga, ST, PC  
Amiga, ST, PC  
Amiga, ST, PC  
Amiga, ST, PC  
C64, Spec  
ST, Spec

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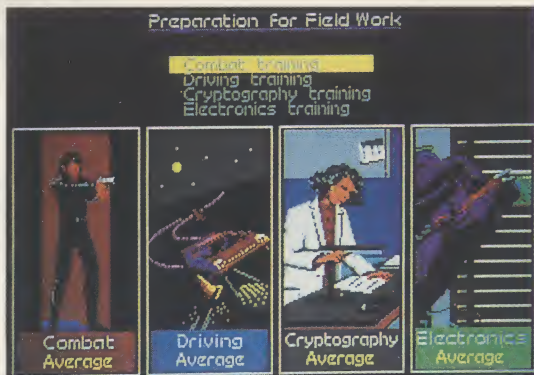
# COVERT ACTION

## Microprose involved in undercover espionage shock!

Well known for titles of truly monolithic proportions, Microprose has come forth with another in the range of these epic games, the strategy orientated *Covert Action*, in which you play the ultimate secret agent known as Max Remington. Dissatisfied by the confines of CIA training, Remington decided to go it alone in the World of undercover investigation - at which he excelled. Now, having worked for nearly every western Government, Remington is rumoured to take on only those cases he finds personally intriguing - the one exception to which is said to be those asked of him personally by the U.S. President.

Upon loading, the game runs through a short intro sequence after which you are presented with three options enabling you to either create or load a new or saved character, or to practice a skill. It's vital to familiarise yourself with the important areas of gameplay with the important areas of combat, driving, cryptography and electronics.

Combat is generally coupled with breaks-ins, whereby you must first select a point of entry. It relies initially on arming yourself adequately, depending upon the tension of the situation you are entering. Equipment includes a hand/machine gun, body armour, grenades, a



The vital skills in which you must be trained.

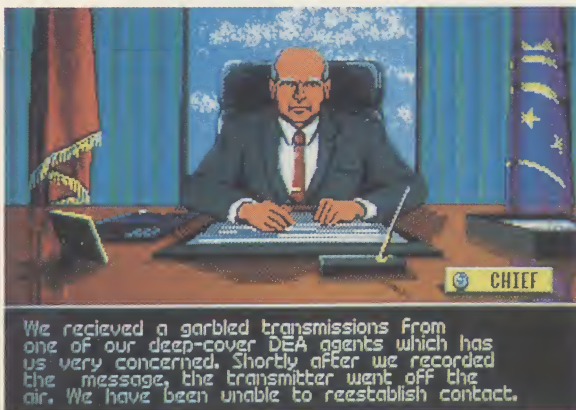
motion detector and camera. Once inside the building, you will be shown a large plan display of the room and its contents through which you are free to rummage. It is advisable that the camera is taken, in addition to available bugging devices, should the room prove fruitful. A smaller display to the right includes the area immediately outside where any additional activity

(like approaching guards) is shown, and a figure showing depleting resources. Combat itself is only engaged if your unscrupulous activities are discovered by others - whereupon a swift hail of bullets drops them like flies. In addition to physical combat, Remington may set booby-traps, achieved by placing a grenade in a strategic position whereby enemy movement will detonate it.

The second of the major skills, (driving) involves pursuit of a suspect through the city streets - having first chosen from four possible

### FROM MICHIGAN TO MICROPROSE

Sid Meier, mainman behind *Covert Action* is rather more than 'just' a programmer. ACE now presents a compact biography on the man... As a child, Sid held a fascination with history, science and game design. In 1976 he graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in computer science. Following his graduation, Meier began programming mini-computers for General Instruments Corporation, Business Systems Division. In 1980, Meier purchased an Atari 800 as he felt its graphic capabilities were well-suited to the games he so enjoyed. Later that year, he set up an Atari user group. Having played an aerial combat game in an arcade, Sid felt he could add more realism with software specifically designed for home computers. Sid entitled his creation *HELLCAT ACE* and from this, Microprose Software emerged. Sid's ideas that software should continually challenge the player, whether beginner or expert, were at the forefront then as they are now, acknowledged by such Microprose releases as *F-19 Stealth Fighter*, *Railroad Tycoon*, *Silent Service* (I and II) and *M1 Tank Platoon*. Keep it up Sid...



Hail to the chief - the Pres briefs our agent.



Outside the FLN hideout and ready to 'bug' the phones.

pursuit cars with varying speeds, handling and levels of conspicuously. Pursuit is depicted via large map to the left, displaying all the locations you've visited. To the right are two smaller, scrolling windows, the lower showing a more detailed map and the upper, a 3D representation of the cars. Having reached your destination a menu of options is displayed, (depending on your state of play - practise or otherwise). During this section you also have the ability to arrest subjects, but be wary that they don't become too aware of your presence beforehand - or you may become the hunted.

Cryptography involves simply deciphering a message sent by an opposing organisation. This is achieved by entering the letter you wish to decipher, followed by your chosen alternative. Once completed, the translated message will invariably reveal clues necessary to the completion of your mission.

Finally, the electronics section involves studying a partially connected circuit linked to either a wiretap or a car tracer and several alarms. The objective is obvious - connect the active current to either a tap or a tracer without setting off an alarm. A time limit is imposed, after which an approaching guard will deter your attempts. Tapping phones is a necessity as regards gathering

information, whereas car tracing proves useful when following a suspect.

Besides each of the four major sections, *Covert Action* includes dozens of additional scenes, locations, possible actions and inter-linking requirements, giving the player enormous tactical scope. These include observation, (a menu from which any of the major skills may be reached) where you may watch a suspected building or suspect, and Intelligence, giving you the ability to scan local and international reports, accuse double-agents or access a crime chronology making collating evidence easy, as it is all stored by your assistant with whom you may liaise.

Each of the organisations encountered will have agents and branches throughout the World

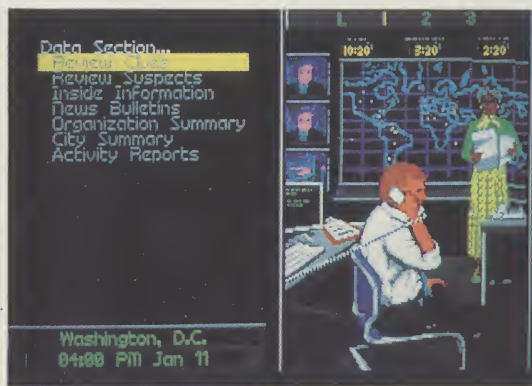
making travel vital, whether inter-state or inter-continental. Once having reached a destination, play continues as normal.

Complexity of gameplay has become synonymous with the Microprose name, something that *Covert Action* has bountiful supplies of. The choice of options provide a depth of play rarely seen. A choice of four skill levels, three mission areas (Middle East, Europe of the Americas), three basic crime-orientations (espionage, international crime or terrorism) and over a dozen of enemy operatives (at least half a dozen of which will be involved with each crime), *Covert Action* is a game that will take many hours of play to successfully complete.

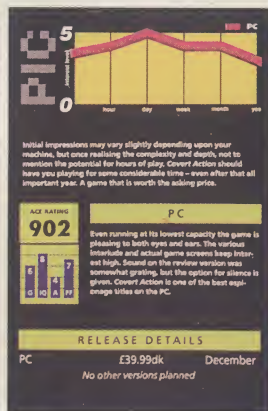
● Alex Ruranski



Can you really believe that a Countach is as inconspicuous as a Datsun?



Wonder if he's calling the ACE Interactive newline on 0800 5555631





Radar can't detect it –

# F-19

STEALTH FIGHTER

but it's coming..



The Biggest,  
Fastest and Smoothest Flight Simulation ever seen.

You're flying on high octane adrenalin

# F-19

STEALTH FIGHTER

Forget about other flights of fancy – This is the Real World.



*Imagine Falcon – imagine a few hundred square miles of fantasy.*



*Imagine F29 – imagine a few thousand miles of fantasy.*

Fly F19 – fly over 409,600 square miles of reality. Fly fast. Fly the real thing.



*Over 3,300 missions possible.*

*Cold, limited or conventional war.*

*Four grades of opponent.*

*Four real-world scenarios.*

*All the action you can handle – and always a new challenge waiting.*

*Graphical detail and depth of gameplay are claims made by others – here they are reality.*

FLY F19 SOON ON  
YOUR ATARI ST AND  
COMMODORE  
AMIGA.

**MICRO PROSE**



Flying into the ground has proved to be hazardous to your health.

IBM Screen shots shown. Actual screens may vary.



# STRIKE EAGLE II

MICROPOSE spend a night at Sierra Hotel

**POSSIBLY** one of the most popular "adult" computer pastimes, computer generated flight simulations have come a long way from the early PSION Flight Simulator days, where you could get suitably enthralled by a row of dots in the shape of runway landing lights. In these enlightened days, when computer flight simulations are so advanced the USAF are using them to train pilots, you'd have to be clinically insane to want to release another little into a field with such abnormally high standards. Once again Microprose have managed not only to beat their previous best title, in this case F-19 Stealth Bomber, but have also come up with a worthy contender to Microsoft's Falcon.

To clear up any confusion, Strike Eagle II is a flight/combat simulator that offers you the chance to fly simulated strike missions through a choice of war zones, ranging from Libya (an easy ride due to their outdated equipment) through the Persian Gulf and Vietnam to Europe (where you can quite easily become a sitting

duck to the most effective defensive equipment there is).

In effect, SE II is an updated version of F-19. Indeed, the areas you fly over are identical to the aforementioned F-19, as are the enemy. The first real difference is that the plane is a lot more fun to fly. First off, you've got a lot more speed to play with, with the added fun of afterburners on board. Also due to its sleeker design, the F-15 is a lot more manoeuvrable than the cumbersome Stealth Bomber, which adds up to much more enjoyable combat. None of this nancy radar evasion for me.

Another thing that has been simplified is the weapons system. Unlike Stealth Bomber, you always carry the same payload of three types of weapon. AIM-120A AMRAAM medium range air-to-air guided missiles, AIM-9M Sidewinder short range air-to-air infra red homing missiles and AGM-65D Maverick air-to-ground attack missiles. Each can be readied for fire at the touch of a button, and selecting a weapon automatically selects the correct radar

setting and enemy tracking mode. All three missiles are 'fire and forget', meaning all you have to do is 'lock on' the missile to a certain enemy (keep tracking the enemy until it comes into range of the currently selected missile, at which point you are told a 'missile lock' is now effective) and press fire to launch the missile.

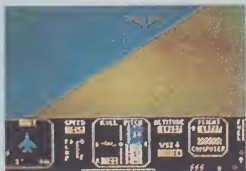
In CGA, EGA or Hercules, the game looks the same as F-19, which is no bad thing. Lots of multi-faceted filled vectors and the like, but in VGA or MCGA, this has to be the best looking flight simulator yet. Just the sheer variety of views alone are enough to warrant a high mark, with missile view, three sorts of external view, and the option to see yourself from your enemy's point of view. The best thing about it, however, is the incredible use of colour. If you remember Archipelagos on the Amiga, you'll recall the very clever misting effect on the horizon. SE II has that very same effect, and it is extremely effective. The feeling of depth is incredible. Add to that the brilliant sensation of speed and you've really got something.

Though maybe not as smooth as Velocity's Jetfighter, F-15 is every bit as fast, and you really notice it on low-level flight. Easily the breathtaking effect is the missile view when you've launched something at the ground. The missiles fly much faster than your plane, so the speed in itself is exhilarating, but it's when the missile picks up speed and starts plummeting toward its target...oh for a hydraulic chair!

So why pick this over Falcon? In terms of being a flight simulator, Falcon has the edge, but even so, this is ideal for a beginner, as it's very easy to fly and it's a lot of fun. Also, experienced buffs are going to get a lot of fun out of this simply for the large number of missions involved and the variety of sceneries. In terms of accuracy, it may never match up to the mighty Falcon, but I can still see myself putting in more than a few hours on this one yet.

● Tony Dillon

## THE ROLL OF HONOUR



**Fighter Pilot - Spectrum**

One of the many Spectrum flight simulators to appear at that time, the only difference being that this one actually gave you decent combat. The scenery was simple: a few dots, yellow ground, blue sky and the enemy planes were merely triangles, but there was something really involving about that little D.I. battlefield.



**Gunship - C64**

Exciting helicopter combat action with amazingly fast filled vectors, especially for a C64. Microprose managed to fit in a heck of a lot onto one little 5 1/4" disk - five areas to fly through, an infinite amount of randomly generated missions, three different skill levels, dozens of different enemies and the ability to build a character, complete with medals and promotions, all awarded with a suitable full colour still picture. Still one of the best.



**Falcon Mission Disk - ST/Amiga**

The cream of the crop so far. After building the seemingly ultimate flight simulator, Microsoft came up with not only a new battle field for you to fly over, but a whole war to fight single handedly protecting no less than three lines of defence while thwarting the oncoming invasion. Pretty heavy stuff, and all played out with some of the fastest filled vectors yet.

### PC VERSION

Incredible. The graphics are amazingly fast and the feeling of distance is enough to scare even the least agoraphobic amongst us. Add to that variety of gameplay and enough challenge to keep you coming back and you've got yourself a regular addition to the pink pages.

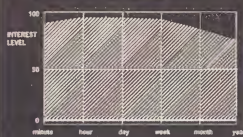
**GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 8**  
**AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 9**  
**ACE RATING 912**

### RELEASE BOX

**IBM PC** £34.95dk **OUT NOW**

**OTHER VERSIONS** TBA

### PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Takes almost no time at all to get wrapped up in this synthetically created universe, but once you're in, you've just got to keep fighting.

## TECHNO PORN!

OK, so just how fast is this beast? Well, you can check the frame rate for whatever machine you are running on as follows. Hit the ALT and F keys, which will print the number of Jiffies per 4 frames on the HUD. Take this number and divide it by the Hz rate of your graphics card; 60 Hz for EGA and CGA, 50 Hz for Hercules Mono, and 70 Hz for MCGA. This gives you seconds per frame. Invert it and you will get frames per second for your machine configuration. Nifty, eh?

The memory taken varies from machine to machine. On a Tandy it takes 384K of memory while on an MCGA machine it takes 512K.

The program took approximately 1.5 man years to develop with many people working on it. Andy Hollis was the main programmer with Sid Meier. Bruce Shelley with Max Remington designed the 3D objects while Bruce alone designed the worlds. Mike Haire did most of the normal art with Murray Taylor assisting. Alan Rorieau along with Chris Taormino and Russ Cooney helped develop game play and of course did the normal testing. Jeff Briggs wrote the manual.

The MCGA/VGA graduated horizon by distance was designed and implemented by Andy Hollis and the Director mode was designed and implemented by Sid Meier.

## ACTION SEQUENCE



You've spotted the enemy! Home in on him!



That's it, you've got a lock!



As Wild Bill Stealey himself would put it, missiles away!



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**ACE**

**A**CE is the ultimate magazine for the future. But of course, on top of the sophisticated gamesplayer. We cater for all these features, we aim to give absolutely the finest coverage of the UK games scene with features, previews, programmer interviews and probably the most depth and reliable reviewing system around.

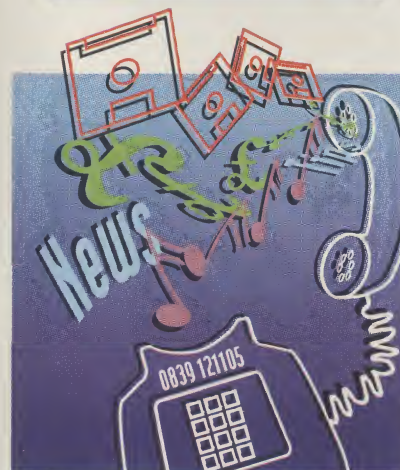
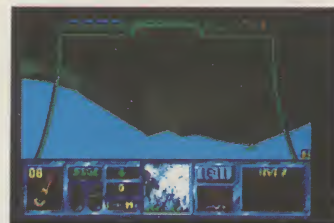
We also aim to provide all the information you need in order to keep abreast of the rapid advances on the future technology scene, with regular reports from the States and Japan and occasional features from all over the globe. Each month we run groundbreaking stories on topics like Virtual Reality, CDTV, Coin-op development and tech gadgets. We also run six pages of news every month gathered from a worldwide telecommunication system.

We know our readers are committed gamesplayers and want to read about the systems they can look forward to in

And each month's issue contains over 30 pages of information in the Pink pages where you can seek out the best software deals, check the best games in the Stockmarket, investigate our Hot of the Shelf section and even try your hand at the ACE Crossword!

Although we've tried to give a reasonable impression of a typical issue of ACE, why not take a look at the real thing. There's a copy on the newstands now, and a subscription offer on page 16.

**Ace magazine is published on the 8th of every month by Emap Images.**



## FLAMES OF FREEDOM HOTLINE

If the the might of the Saharan Empire is proving too much, our exclusive ACE Flames of Freedom Hotline is for you!

Simply dial the number at the bottom of the page and you can listen to the creator of *Midwinter* and *Flames of Freedom*, Mike Singleton, explaining some expert strategies and giving beginners some useful advice too.

The Hotline number is updated every fortnight, and covers the whole gaming arena. Each month you'll find competitions, programmer profiles, interviews and tips mixed in with the hottest news stories of the moment. Our regular updates enable us to keep ACE Hotline callers right up to the minute!

THE Number

**0839 121105**





*Good, Great, Best,  
Better*

*élite, n. The choice part, the best,  
(Of). [F,= choice]  
plus, adj. Additional, extra;  
positive. [L,= more]*



Good games come and go, and great ones last much longer. The best can win awards, but only one can claim to be Elite.

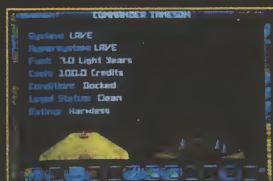
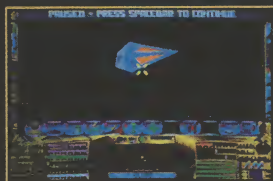
When the history of computer gaming is written, its name appears early on. And on. And on. Generations have played it; some have beaten it; but none have tired of it.

The original mix of space exploration, trading, and combat has endured imitators, pretenders and millions of hours of play. Now the best is to get better.

Rainbird have updated the IBM PC compatibles version to utilise the technology which has developed over the game's lifetime.

Amazing 3-D graphics, in EGA, VGA and MCGA modes bring even more life to cosmic combat; a redesigned icon-driven interface speeds trading, information gathering and map reading; support of Ad-Lib and Roland sound-boards enable your ears to share the vivid pleasures of life on the high seas of space; and brand new missions extend gameplay even further than before.

The classic six-year old recipe remains the same; new ingredients add to the flavour; treat your taste-buds to the best. Elite Plus.



Elite Plus will be available for IBM PC compatibles at £34.99.  
The original versions of Elite are available for Atari ST and Commodore Amiga, at £24.99.

Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos. Tel: 0666 504326

# TANK BUSTING!

Everyone's been so obsessed with the latest state-of-the-art flight simulations recently that the more down-to-earth armoured divisions of computer entertainment seem to have been forgotten. After you've flicked on the afterburners and dived in out of the sun, surely rumbling around on the ground taking pot-shots at other metal mickies must be a bit, well, just a teensy bit dull?

Oh boy, do we have news for you...!



Advanced tank design, as on this recent example, is particularly suited to advanced 3D display. The angular shielding, designed to deflect as well as resist bombardment, has a nice filled vector look even in real life! M1TP offers a high degree of detail in the display, but you can toggle the level of detail to suit different machines. The more detail, the more processing power you need...

Anyone who remembers the shock of seeing their windscreen shatter after receiving a shell up the rear in Battlezone will know that tank busting can result in almost terminal adrenalin doses – and the good news is that the software boys are about to ram this lesson home with several promised heavy-duty tank simulations. Microprose's is the first to appear, Realtime's Tank Command is poised for release, and there are others rumbling along the track. What's all the fuss about?

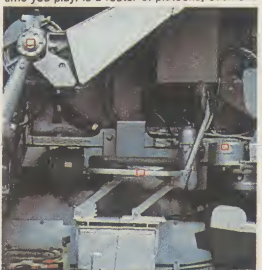
ACE first got its hands on a copy of Microprose's M1 Tank Platoon during a visit to the Bovington Tank Museum in the company of 'Prose's Major 'Wild Bill' Stealey. We were pretty impressed by the speed of the game, the detailed 3D VGA display, the choice of heavy-weight armour you could fling about, and the even heavier weight 206pp manual, which must be getting on for an industry record.

In fact the manual just about sums up the new era of tank sims. Things may be slower on the ground, but that simply means more opportunity for strategy and game detail. None of those 206 pages are wasted, and every one tells you something useful about the game – yet it's a tribute to the program design in M1 Tank Platoon that you can get down to playing immediately. What's more, the detail in the game, which ranges from the explanation of and opportunity to indulge in conventional tank tactics to the muzzle velocity of the 7.62mm PKT Medium Machine Gun, isn't fiction – Microprose had to invoke the Freedom of Information Act in the States to get the necessary documentation released, and they've made excellent use of it.

Our only niggle here was the quality of the manual binding, which appeared to shed pages at an alarming rate. The manual's pretty essential, however, so we ended up hole-punching all the pages and popping them in a ring binder.

#### THE GAME

M1TP revolves around your choice of platoon, your choice of men, and your choice of conflict scenario. Stored on disk (and updated every time you play) is a roster of platoons, each one



This is where the gunner would be sitting in real life. It's rather less comfortable than your armchair...

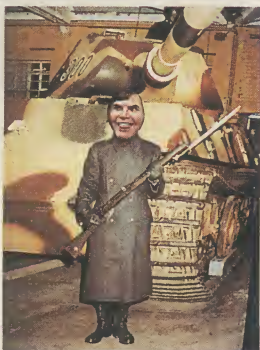


featuring different names and associated skill ratings. Your average tank comes equipped with a tank commander sticking his head out of the hatch, a gunner who guns, a loader who loads, and a driver who keeps the 57.1 tonnes of heavy metal thundering across the 3D terrain at speeds of up to 67kph – an unnerving experience for the uninitiated who thought that tanks, well, sort of trundled along.

The skills of your crew are of paramount importance and your long-term objective is to develop their skills in action, winning the medals and improving their performance. Your ultimate goal is, naturally, to become embroiled in a full-scale war against the Soviets and send their T80m84's and other metal monsters to the scrapheap. Microprose obviously aren't in a hurry to declare an end to East-West conflict, which seems a pity until you realise that if the game is to be realistic it has to reflect the fact that the Soviets are currently the only people with some hardware to challenge you with.

Winning the war, however, is quite impossible unless your crews are up to scratch. That's because M1TP is a clever blend of player intervention and computer control. Battles are fought over a 3D map with hills, valleys, rivers, and many other topographical features. At any time during battle you can select any one of your vehicles, wherever and whatever it may be, from a scout helicopter fies, even total flight freaks get their fix here) checking out the opposition to an M1 Abrahams sneaking up the river, and get the relevant 3D view up on your screen.

With tanks, this selection gives you complete control over that vehicle and all the crew members. The good news, however, is that this complete control is supplemented by the computer so that you can, for example, take the commander's position, sticking your head out of the hatch and peering around with your binoculars, while at the same time telling your driver to go full speed ahead, your gunner to fire at will, and the other vehicles in your formation to take up Echelon left formation (ranged behind you, guns at 45 degrees). Suddenly, there you are careering across the landscape, guns all blazing together, smashing your way through the opposition...Flight sim freaks can eat hot lead for all I care, this beats single handed aerial combat any day.



OK, so Wild Bill Stealey looks as if he's finally flipped his lid. However, he did have the good sense to use the Freedom of Information Act to get the data he needed for the game.



Major Wild Bill takes a real tankbust through the game.

# ATTACK!

How does it feel to roar into battle at the head of your armoured platoon? Here's a quick engagement with the Soviets to whet your appetite...



On the map display, here at full zoom, we see our four tanks ready for action. It all looks green because they're on a hill...Some of the crews are over the hill, but that's another matter...



Zoom out to see the entire map. The panel on the right shows the current vehicle's statistics. Note that the commander is, er, 'inept'. The red spots are hostile vehicles. Let's go get 'em!

The map screen is where you do your thinking, and where you find out what's going on across the entire battle arena. Your units and the enemy's are all clearly marked and you can select any unit (hostile or friendly) by pinpointing it with the crosshairs and pressing RETURN. This not only gives you control over it, but also all pertinent information in a window to the right.



The driver peers through his windscreen and puts his foot down. The instruments aren't just for show – each one tells you something that could save your life!



A quick eyeball out of the hatch catches one of our other platoon members on the left. We're going to follow the stream to the west and then cut off north to engage the enemy (check the map).



As we approach, the gunner gets jumpy. Needle indicator at bottom centre selects appropriate ammo – we're currently using Sabot armour piercing (range around 1500 metres). The target's visible dead ahead just above the sights – all we've got to do now is close in and let rip!

## THE ACE VERDICT

We rate M1TP at 926. That ought to speak for itself. It's a welcome break from flight sims that boasts enough detail to keep even the most compulsive nitpicker happy, and at the same time has a breadth of challenge and combat scenarios that should satisfy the most ardent gamer. A winner.



# MIDWINTER

At last we've got our hands on a full production copy of *Midwinter* (extensively previewed in earlier issues of ACE). You may have read reviews of it elsewhere in recent months, but these were taken from a pre-production version that was demonstrated to magazines. This is the first gameplay review you're likely to see... much more important, in our view.

The game comes with bags of support material: a very lengthy manual (with a few misprints), a short 'quickstart' instruction sheet, a map, and a pad of mini-maps that you can use for planning campaigns. Much as I like quickstart instructions, this is definitely one game you cannot play effectively without reading at least half the manual.

What's good about it, however, is that you can start playing straightaway. Your objective is prevent Masters' invasion force overrunning the Midwinter island by recruiting Peace Force members and combining occasional direct attack (using rifles, missiles, grenades etc) with strategic management of people and resources.

The first thing to do is check the map you start in a different position each game, but other features and people remain in the same location). What is the nearest garage to get a snow buggy (quicker than skiing)? Where is the nearest potential recruit? And where is Kristiansen (who can recruit four people

MICROPROSE's

Mike Singleton

megagame hits the

streets at last...

you to act with all possible speed. Unlike some of the manual to play effectively, the actual



*Skiing is deceptively easy at the beginning because Stark is very good at it. Other characters are more likely to take a tumble, wasting valuable time in the process.*

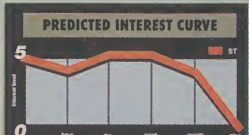
commands are very simple to learn. You can use mouse, joystick, or keyboard – the manual recommends a mouse but I found the joystick easier for skiing and bugging.

Mike Singleton's previous mega-hit, *Lords of Midnight*, succeeded because of its playability – none of the other *Midnight* games came anywhere close. It's a great relief to report that *Midwinter* is undoubtedly as playable as LOM and a good deal more challenging. The only drawback is that the landscape isn't quite detailed enough (OK, it's all covered in snow) but you spend much more time thinking and planning

that captured characters can easily be freed (by blowing up their prison) and injured ones are automatically 'rescued' and dumped in the nearest village.

Combine these advantages with the fact that, when you start, the enemy has already overrun much of the South-East, and you have a situation that forces

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No other versions planned.		



The initial feel of the game is very favourable – well packaged, and interesting documentation.

There's a long learning curve – at least a day for the committed player – but the joy of *Midwinter* is that you can get started straightaway and make meaningful progress immediately. Unlike some complex games, there's no period of early discouragement when everything seems just too difficult.

There are three ways of playing (that determine how the enemy attacks you, if at all) which effectively provide various levels of difficulty. The only trouble here is that if you win on the easiest level you are not so likely to want to win again on a higher level since the actual strategic process remains the same (it's simply more difficult to achieve). However this does extend the long-term interest slightly. But then perhaps this is academic: you're certainly not going to finish this one in a hurry, and you WILL want to finish it – you can be sure of that!

ATARI ST

GRAPHICS 8

IO FACTOR 9

AUDIO 4

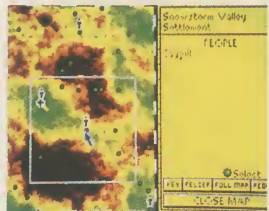
FUN FACTOR 7

AGE RATING

948

than you did in the previous game. It's also a pity that the map screen requires disk access, since you need it frequently. These niggles apart, this is a sure-fire success. Stand by for a full player's guide in next month's ACE.

● Steve Cooke



*Using the map is a frequent necessity while planning your campaign. Moving your arrow over a feature brings up information in the panel on the right. We've just started and have located our first potential recruit.*

immediately by radio, if he can find one? Lazy players will quit and restart until they find themselves in an initial location either right by a garage or close to one, preferably centrally located.

From then on, it's a matter of moving your characters around as efficiently as possible (they get tired and injured very easily), balancing the need to destroy resources (denying them to the enemy) with your own need to use them. Gameplay is made much easier through the fact

REBELLIOUS DOGS!

You should have known it was useless to resist me! I, General Masters, am the greatest warrior the world has ever known. You have lost the battle and now you will lose your lives!

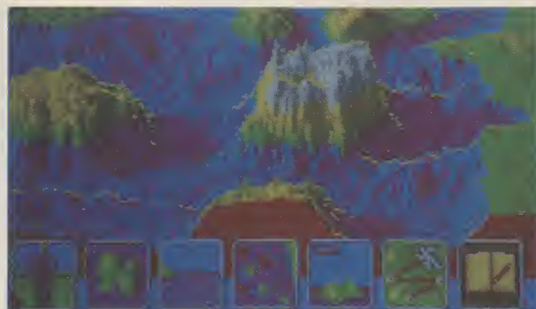
ACE RATED

948

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

The only way to start again is to surrender. Your reward: this screen, and the sound effects of a firing squad in the distance.

screen test computer



# FLAMES of FREEDOM

Microprose prepare to launch their assault on the New Year market with one of the biggest sequels around...

**M**aelstrom Games has been working on *Flames of Freedom* ever since the completion of *Midwinter*, and it has now reached the final straight in the development race.

Rather than simply producing a different scenario based on the *Midwinter* games mechanics, the whole game shell has been recreated to make *Flames of Freedom* a truly massive and original game. Maelstrom paid close attention to criticisms of the original game, in order to align the game with everyone's tastes.

The most universally criticised element was that the number of characters which had to be controlled was simply too large. It wasn't possible to keep tabs on all the characters at once, and the game tended to be a massive juggling act rather than a linear path to a successful conclusion.



*Driving over the sandy dunes in your jeep. The status area at the top of the screen shows direction and state of affairs.*

So, *Flames of Freedom* offers only one character to control, but this central hero can have virtually any characteristic you want. Using the character designer, you can select from a massive array of chins, eyes, noses, ears, hairstyles and mouths, gradually piece together your ideal looking agent. A character will also be endowed with a brace of attributes which will affect their ability to interact with other people.



*Jean Margiotti, an island resident. Recently in trouble with the cops, Jean may well be willing to help your cause. But which approach should you try?*

ACE PREPLAY

Easy to control than Midwinter

Character control

Interaction

Lots of depth

It remains to be seen just how intelligent the computerised characters will be

Release Details

AMIGA

£24.99

Feb

ST

£24.99

Feb



*Making faces. From a wide selection of fleshy items, you can construct your very own special agent.*

Since you are essentially alone in your mission, it's vital to control the indigenous personnel from each island in an effective manner. When you bump into one of these people, you can opt to use your Charm, sex appeal, authority, reasoning or deception to influence them. If you beg too much, however, you won't have much authority. If you rush around threatening everyone, no-one will listen to your reasoning.

Along with the niceties of interaction, there's the more physical side of the game, rushing around from island to island, blowing up enemy installations and claiming each atoll for the Free World. Since the game offers an enormous play area, it isn't desirable to have to watch all of the driving. Instead, an autopilot option allows you to plot your destination, and let the computer get on with getting you there. You will only be alerted or disturbed if there's some fighting to be done.



*Driving over the sandy dunes in your jeep. The status area at the top of the screen shows direction and state of affairs.*